



WASTE MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Hotels produce large quantities of solid waste, from packaging to food scraps to cleaning and maintenance materials, some of which is toxic. (For more information on proper handling of chemicals, see Chemical Use on page 10.) In many cases, this waste is collected in badly designed waste dumps, discarded directly into oceans or rivers, or simply dumped in areas out of sight of guests. In addition to visually degrading a destination, improper waste disposal can lead to water and soil pollution through leaching of contaminants from waste piles. Poorly designed waste dumps can result in fires, odors, flies and ineffective containment of wastes. Uncontrolled disposal of toxic items such as paint cans and batteries can severely contaminate water, air and soil resources, threatening the environment and human health. Even where waste is disposed of legally, landfills have limited capacity, which is a particular problem on small islands.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- An effective waste management program can reduce hauling and disposal fees.
- Reuse and recycling of products can cut product purchasing costs.
- Improper or illegal waste disposal may lead to significant fines and clean-up costs.
- Proper waste disposal may limit the risk of litigation from guests or area residents who become ill from hazardous wastes.
- Effective waste management can protect a hotel's image by limiting visual degradation of the area and enhancing approval from guests. The visible effects of waste disposal is the most mentioned concern by guests regarding their holiday destinations.
- Waste dumped directly into oceans or rivers can decrease the quality of tourism resources by reducing fish populations and making the water unsuitable for recreational activities.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Begin by reviewing the types and quantities of waste produced and current disposal methods and costs.
- Develop your solid waste management program around the three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.
- REDUCE: Buy products in bulk and with less packaging, to reduce waste generation.
- REUSE:
 - Replace disposable items with reusable ones, such as rechargeable batteries, refillable soap and shampoo containers and cloth laundry bags.
 - Require vendors to take back pallets and crates.
- RECYCLE:
 - Separate waste at the source, rather than having to go through all the trash after it is collected. For example, provide containers for recyclables in guest rooms and compost bins in kitchen work areas.
 - Where there is a market for recyclables, recycle items such as paper, glass, metal and plastic.
 - Compost organic wastes such as food scraps, leaves and tree cuttings.
 - Provide waste bins for your guests in key areas, particularly by the beach and along nature trails.
 - Keep solid waste in a safe, sanitary holding place until it is picked up by the municipality or other disposal entities.
 - Work with other businesses and organizations and the local municipality to support the development of efficient waste separation, collection, recycling and treatment systems.